

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 209 239

SP 019 091

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TITLE Individualizing the Mainstream Classroom.
PUB DATE Oct 81
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Congress for Individualized Instruction (13th, Tucson, AZ, October 29, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affective Behavior; Cognitive Style; Elementary Secondary Education; Individualized Education Programs; *Individualized Instruction; Low Achievement; *Mainstreaming; *Programed Instruction; Student Motivation; *Student Teacher Relationship; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Response; Teaching Styles

ABSTRACT

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act requires an individualized education plan for all students identified as handicapped. While computer technology has application for greater individualization, no single method makes a perfect "fit" for all students. Social survival skills are vital elements of mainstreaming as well as academics. Programmed instruction does not achieve the crucial educational goals of changing attitudes, interpersonal skills, problem solving and participant acceptance. An interaction model that can be used by regular and special educators is based on the assumption that teaching is not simply an act of cognition and that effective instruction is a result of interaction, perceptions, and expectations. This model identifies opportunities for teacher response to students, suggests types of feedback that are effective in encouraging students, and describes personal behaviors that exemplify warmth and friendly interest in interaction between the teacher and the student. Linking cognitive style with affective behavior can achieve successful mainstreaming and individualization. (JD)

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ED209234

INDIVIDUALIZING THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

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13th Annual Conference
International Congress for Individualized Instruction
Tucson, Arizona
October 29, 1981

INDIVIDUALIZING THE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

No single organizational structure has received the thrust of individualizing instruction. At the same time, no organizational structure has the number of practitioners ill equipped to implement its operation in the regular classroom. P.L. 94-142, The Education For All Handicapped Children Act, requires an individualized educational plan for students identified as handicapped. This requirement coupled with the move to integrate special needs students in the mainstream of American education has created massive misunderstanding of individualization, particularly for the special needs student.

Computer technology has application for greater individualization. However, no single method makes a perfect "fit" for all students. In fact, the one-to-one relationship of student to machine is not what most mainstream students need. The handicapped student has been "plugged in" to hardware; what he/she needs now is constructive interaction. Social survival skills are vital elements of mainstreaming as well as academics. Researchers have noted that student-machine interaction is not as highly correlated as student-student and student-teacher interaction (Carrol, 1972; Newstrom, 1980). It is recognized the computer programs are often designed by high achievers and fail to utilize characteristics and learning modes of low achievers and the handicapped. Student learning styles and content goal require a critical link to individualized instruction. The sequential, progressive stages of programmed instruction have proven highly successful and these formats are effective for knowledge acquisition and retention. Several interaction components are effectively addressed using the computer; however, the machine cannot replace the teacher. How successful the computer based lesson will be depends upon what the teacher does prior, during and after the programmed instruction. This is where the interaction mode links with technology to

facilitate the acquisition of knowledge.

Carroll reported Programmed Instruction ranked first in knowledge acquisition and knowledge retention. Programmed instruction was not ranked for training goals of changing attitudes, interpersonal skills, problem solving and participant acceptance. These training goals are crucial to the handicapped. Introduction of these goals through the interaction model is proposed. The interaction model used by regular and special educators is based on the assumption that teaching is not simply an act of cognition. Effective instruction is a result of interaction, perceptions and expectations. The impact of these perceptions and expectations may negate academic gains normally associated with retention of knowledge from computer lessons. Man is a social being and requires interaction, therefore, educators need to model the behaviors they desire. Teacher style that does make a difference is supported by research (Munroe, 1978). Selected behaviors are indicated in the interaction model. These skills and techniques are sequential and build the expectation that students can learn.

The interaction model emphasizes equitable teacher behaviors to all students. Teachers tend to give perceived low achievers and handicapped fewer supportive and less motivating interaction. Constructive communication is necessary to foster social acceptance, a critical need of the exceptional child. Handicapped mainstreamed in regular classrooms find the social integration a major hurdle. Once acceptance is achieved, academics can be accomplished. Teachers model acceptance through their teaching style. The "different" one can be just as isolated in a class of 30 as in a closet, if no one acknowledges they are present and have worth.

Use of the model in 24 classrooms for a school year in the Tucson Unified School District produced striking results for the exceptional child. Several of these interactions actively involve the affective as well as the

cognitive realm of learning. Similar patterns in research programs TFACH and PRIDE support local data. Teachers practicing supportive and motivating interactions in conjunction with other methodology reported target students (initially perceived low achievers) achieved better than expected (53%) or as well as expected (41%). Teachers reported evidence of improved citizenship for 67% of the target students. Target students evidence improved attendance patterns (10%). According to teacher reports, ninety percent (90%) of the target students in classrooms utilizing constructive interaction patterns evidenced academic gain. While students were achieving academically and developed a sense of self worth, teachers reported a sense of efficacy and increased acceptance of student variability. Teachers reported interactions 2B Praise, 1A Response Opportunity, 2A Individual Helping and 1C Proximity as most effective in their use of the model. (Munroe, 1981)

To be most effective, individualizing in the mainstream classroom must emphasize a balance between knowledge acquisition and constructive interactions. The teacher has control over the variables that foster respect for the individual and an emphasis on learning and achievement. Linking the cognitive with the affective can achieve successful mainstreaming and individualization. The essential tool is the teacher. What the teacher does, with or without hardware, makes the difference for all students, especially the handicapped.

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TESA INTERACTION MODEL

UNITS	STRAND A: RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES	STRAND B: FEEDBACK	STRAND C: PERSONAL REGARD
1	Equitable distribution of response opportunities	Affirm or correct student's performance	Proximity
2	Individual helping	Praise of learning performance	Courtesy
3	Latency	Reasons for praise	Personal interest/ Compliments
4	Delving	Listening	Toaching
5	Higher level questioning	Accepting feelings	Desisting

EXAMPLES OF INTERACTIONS

For
MODEL COMPONENTS

UNITS	STRAND A RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES	STRAND B FEED BACK	STRAND C PERSONAL REGARD
1	Teacher Solicits Responses From Students in all Sections of Room.	Acknowledges Correct Answer or Corrects Student's Response.	Teacher Moves Within Arm's Length of Student.
2	Teacher Gives Students Who Need or Ask For it, Individual Help.	Examples: That's Great! Fine Job, etc.	Teacher is Polite to Student: Pardon Me Thank You, etc.
3	Teacher Allows at Least 5 Seconds For a Student to Respond.	I Like the Way You Said That. Good Choice of Colors. I liked the Way You Worked in the Group, etc.	Takes Personal Interest in What Student is Saying or Says Something Showing Personal Knowledge of Student. Compliments Student on Something Outside of Classroom. Example: How Nice Your Look! Congratulations on Good Game Last Night.
4	Rephrases or Gives Clues to Student to Encourage Responses.	Listens Attentively to What Student Says. Do Not Do Something Else While Listening. Can Rephrase What Student Says so Student Knows You Understood.	Touches Student in Friendly Manner.
5	Teacher Asks For Student to Make an Inference, Elaborate or Answer, Make Generalization, Draw Conclusion, etc.	Accepts What Student Said Without Putting Personal Values in.	Corrects Student Behavior in Calm, Courteous Manner in Positive Way. No Put-Down. Do Not Correct as if You Expected Particular Student to Misbehave.